

"Absence, Intrusion, Being Present: the analytic space of becoming"

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Content

Our choice is to work through the questions that emerged from the central dynamics in the two case presentations.

In both processes, the analysts find themselves confronted with the task of “being present” in analytic work. One case focuses more on neurotic struggles around identity and masculinity. In contrast, the other delves into the realm of unrepresented and unsymbolized states of being, as well as the battle for survival, containment, and becoming. Together, they raise questions about the relationship between neutrality and analytic presence: What does neutrality mean in these structurally very different cases? Is neutrality the foundation of analytic presence, or does it sometimes undermine the analyst's capacity to be present? How does one differentiate between neutrality as abstinence and neutrality as absence? Is neutrality understood as withdrawal, or as a flexible position that allows transformation? What happens to the concept of neutrality when the analyst must oscillate between symbolic interpretation and pre-symbolic functions of holding, containing, or even organizing psychic life? Is there a risk that “being neutral” becomes a defense against being present or even neglecting the patient? When does “being present” risk collapsing into intrusiveness?